



**United States Border Patrol
San Diego Sector
Public Information Office
2411 Boswell Road
San Diego, California 91914-3519
(619) 216-4182**



PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 27, 2001**

ALIEN SMUGGLER LEADS MAN TO HIS DEATH SENTENCED TO SIX AND A HALF YEARS IN PRISON

San Diego, CA: The U.S. Border Patrol and the United States Attorney for the Southern District of California put to rest the snow storm of March 6, 2000, yesterday. It was on this date that the Border Patrol, cooperating with state and local agencies, rescued 43 individuals who had fallen into distress from the elements. Unfortunately three individuals, Nationals of Mexico, died as a result of exposure to the cold. The smuggler was identified during the investigation, which led to the prosecution and jury trial of Antonio Hernández-Rodríguez.

Gregory A. Vega, United States Attorney for the Southern District of California, announced a guilty verdict in the case on September 19, 2000. The jury found Antonio Hernández-Rodríguez guilty on all 19 counts of the indictment which charged him with alien smuggling resulting in death, alien smuggling for profit, and transportation of undocumented aliens. Antonio Hernández-Rodríguez's participation in the March 6th incident included leading 25 Mexican Nationals into the snow around Sunrise Highway. As a result of his disregard for human life a member of his group, Emeterio Flores-Zotelo, died as a result of exposure during the four-day trip. Yesterday he was sentenced to six and half years in prison. "This is another fine example of multi-agency cooperation in the interest of Justice. Every facet of the cooperation is necessary to ensure that lives will be saved and smugglers will be held accountable for their reckless endangerment of others," said San Diego Sector Deputy Chief Harold R. Beasley, Sr.